

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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COMMISSIONER ALAN B. ARMIGO ELECTED CHAIR

County Commissioner Alan B. Armigo was elected to serve as Chair of the Commission for 2006 at the first Administrative Meeting in January. This is the third consecutive year he has been elected Chair. Commissioner Armigo is currently serving his first term representing District 1. He joined the Board of Commissioners after serving as an Albuquerque City Councilman for twelve years. He is currently the Governmental Liaison for APS where he has over thirty years experience as a teacher and coach. He is an advocate for education, youth programs, smart planning for growth and operating a fiscally responsible government. He serves on the Albuquerque / Bernalillo County Government Commission (ABCGC), Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, Board of Finance, Hispano Chamber of Commerce, Legislative Committee, Mid-Region Council of Governments, and the Metropolitan Transportation Board.



Left to right: Commissioner Teresa L. Cordova, Commissioner E. Tim Cummins, Commissioner Michael Brasher, Commissioner Alan A. Armigo, and Commissioner Deanna Archuleta-Loeser.

Commissioner Teresa Córdova, PhD., was elected to serve as Vice-Chair of the Commission. District 2

Commissioner Teresa Cordova began her first term as County Commissioner in January 2004 with extensive experience working with residents and community leaders to identify issues and provide solutions to the South Valley. A professor in Community and Regional Planning at the University of New Mexico, she has taught classes in land use, economic development and community based planning since 1991. Through UNM, she directs the Resource Center for Raza Planning, a student group of planning and policy analysts. She received a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, was the recipient of the YWCA "Woman on the Move" award and was an Outstanding South Valley Citizen. She also served on the Unification Charter Commission and was President of the Board for Rio Grande Development Corporation. Her family originates from northern New Mexico. She has a sixteen-year-old son, Jose Miguel, who attends Rio Grande High School and plays on the Varsity basketball team. She serves on the Albuquerque / Bernalillo County Government Commission (ABCGC), the Metropolitan Detention Center Operation Subcommittee, Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, Board of Finance, Legislative Committee, Metropolitan Transport Board, and the Mid-Region Transit District Board.

APS/TVI ELECTION UPDATE

(Voters can call 768-4085 or visit the County website at www.bernco.gov to find their polling location)

Bernalillo County Clerk Mary Herrera reminds voters that Early Absentee In-Person Voting for the APS/TVI Special Bond Election is taking place at the County Clerk's office on the 6th Floor at One Civic Plaza between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm through February 3, 2006. Voters may request an Absentee Ballot by calling the County Clerk's office at 768-4085. The Absentee Ballots can be mailed back to the Clerk's office or returned on election day to the Clerk's office or the voter's precinct location. The APS/TVI Special Bond Election will be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2006 with consolidated polling locations opening at 7:00 am.

Due to new voter identification laws, all voters are required to select the type of identification they would like to present if they choose to vote at their precincts. Their options include an original or copy of a current and valid photo identification, an original copy of a utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or student identification or the voter may verbally or in written format state their name, year of birth and the last four digits of their social security number.

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BERNALILLO COUNTY HOUSING DEPARTMENT HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS AMONG BEST IN U.S.

2005 was a banner year for the Bernalillo County Housing Department and it appears that 2006 is shaping up to be just as successful. In 2005, the County Housing Department closed more HUD Section 8 Home Ownership Program transactions than any other county in the nation with a total of 121. The success also prompted the National Congressional Hispanic Caucus to recognize the department for its efforts in increasing the rate of Hispanic homeownership in New Mexico.



Now there's a new program involving an innovative partnership with Fannie Mae and Suburban Mortgage designed to assist prospective homebuyers who need help repairing their credit. The Lease/Purchase Program is for families with credit problems that may limit them from being able to purchase a home. Fannie Mae has committed \$3 million dollars for mortgages to the county program. Qualified applicants will work with Bernalillo County Housing Department to lease a home while they go through extensive home ownership counseling which could last up to, but no longer than, three years. Once a person's bad credit has been cleared, he or she may apply for a mortgage. Lease payments will be applied towards the purchase of the house.

The Lease/Purchase Program has funding for 20 to 25 families. The County is accepting applications now. Basic requirements include: your credit issues must be resolvable within six months to three years; you must meet HUD income guidelines (earning less than 80% of the median income), and you must pass a criminal background check.

For more information about the Lease/Purchase Program and to secure forms, visit the Housing Department homepage on <http://www.bernco.gov>, the official website of Bernalillo County. From the front page, click on the "Departments, Offices & Divisions" link and then select the "Housing" department. Information is also available at the Housing Department, 1900 Bridge SW in Albuquerque.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

The Bernalillo County Family Literacy Program is seeking volunteers to provide free, one-on-one tutoring for children in elementary and middle school. Requirements include one, three hour training session and the willingness to commit at least two hours per week for one school semester. Bernalillo County conducts background checks on all prospective volunteers.

Volunteers meet students after school at community centers with libraries and computer labs and listen to the students read aloud and help with spelling, word recognition, reading comprehension, and writing skills. Many tutors make lessons fun by also reading to the students and playing word or educational computer games with the children.

Volunteering for the Family Literacy Program gives tutors an opportunity to use their skills and talents to make a difference in the life of a child and in their community. Over the years, the program has served hundreds of Bernalillo County children.



To become a tutor or obtain tutoring for your child, contact Bernalillo County Literacy Coordinator, Judith Ann Garcia, at 505-314-0496 or by e-mail at jagarcia@bernco.gov. There is also more information on the Family Literacy Program on the Special Programs homepage on <http://www.bernco.gov>. From the front page, click on the "Departments, Offices & Divisions" link and then select "Special Programs" and the link for the Family Literacy Program.

EAST MOUNTAIN GYM TO BE NAMED IN MEMORY OF FALLEN RESIDENTS

Bernalillo County Commissioners have voted to dedicate a proposed \$4 million East Mountain High School community gymnasium in memory of Richard Smith and David Fisher, two East Mountain residents who were slain August 18, 2005 in Albuquerque. Albuquerque Police Officer Richard Smith was shot and killed in the line of duty following a 22-year career with APD. He was responding to a mental health pick-up order with fellow officer Michael King when he died. David Fisher had just begun his senior year at East Mountain High School when he was killed on the same day, allegedly by the same shooter. Fisher was an avid motocross rider and was shot at Rider Valley Motorcycles where he was working that day. Smith and Fisher were among five people killed in Albuquerque last August 18.

In 2005 the New Mexico State Legislature appropriated \$1.4 million dollars to design and construct the gymnasium to be used jointly by East Mountain High School and the Vista Grande Community Center. Bernalillo County contributed an additional \$341,555 to the project and is authorized to name County facilities after individuals. "These two individuals were outstanding and made significant contributions to the community and were thought highly of," said Bernalillo County Commissioner Michael Brasher who represents the East Mountains. "I feel it's important we recognize them by dedicating the gym."

The Fisher and Smith Memorial Gymnasium is expected to be built adjacent to a memorial garden for David Fisher on the East Mountain High School campus with a ground breaking tentatively scheduled for Fall 2006.

RESIDENTS INVITED TO PUBLIC MEETINGS ON THE WATER CONSERVATION PLAN FOR BERNALILLO COUNTY

Living in New Mexico, water is a precious resource. According to Bernalillo County residents, lack of education, no incentives, population growth and general apathy are some of the obstacles to water conservation. A DRAFT water conservation plan for the unincorporated areas of the County has been drafted by Bernalillo County Public Works Department. A series of five public meeting will be held to discuss the Draft Water Conservation Plan Review with residents and business owners.

The plan applies to the areas of the County that are outside city limits. Residents connected to the municipal water system in Albuquerque are already subject to conservation rules. The county's water conservation plan will recommend specific conservation measures, along with a timeframe for residents to follow. The conservation plan will build on the efforts of the County's 40-year water plan which was recently developed to ensure the County will have sufficient water to meet the needs over the next 40 years.

Residents, landowners, and all interested parties are encouraged to attend and share their comments and suggestions about this plan. There will also be a presentation on various components of the draft plan. The plan can be accessed on the front page of the County's website @ www.bernco.gov on the front page.



WATER CONSERVATION PLAN SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

January 19, 2006, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Paradise Hills Community Center, 5901 Paradise Blvd., NW
January 25, 2006, 6:30 - 8:30 pm. William Sabrava Sub Station, 10401 Holly Avenue, NE
February 1, 2006, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Los Vecinos Community Center, 478 1/2 Old Highway 66
February 9, 2006, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Ramond G. Sanchez Community Center, 9800 4th Street, NW
February 16, 2006, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., South Area Command Center, 2039 Isleta, SW

If you have any questions regarding these meetings, please call Kerry Bassore with Bernalillo County Public Works Division at (505) 848-1500. Special needs or accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request made at least 48 hours in advance of the public meetings by calling Kerry Bassore.

ANTI-GRAFFITI PROGRAM GEARING UP FOR 2006 ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Because of its rising prevalence in many areas and the high costs typically associated with cleanup and prevention, graffiti is a persistent problem. Few graffiti offenders are apprehended and some change their methods and locations in response to possible apprehension and cleanups. Because graffiti is not routinely reported to police or other agencies, its true scope is unknown. But graffiti has become a major concern, and the mass media, including movies and websites glamorizing or promoting graffiti as an acceptable form of urban street art have contributed to its spread.

The County has had tremendous success combating graffiti but it remains a serious problem and additional volunteers are needed to keep vandals at bay. “Graffiti vandalism is a power struggle between the vandals and the community and the only strategy that can be an effective deterrent is rapid graffiti removal,” says Bernalillo County Anti-Graffiti Coordinator Michael Rodriguez. “It is for this very reason that we encourage the public to contact our Graffiti Removal Hotline at 768-4400 even if they see the smallest mark on a fence or wall.”

Graffiti removal service is available free of charge to Bernalillo County residents in the unincorporated area. In 2005, volunteers using donated paint and supplies covered over 60,000 square feet of graffiti and picked up nearly 2,000 pounds of trash, litter and debris. This volunteer effort saved taxpayers \$48,000. A contractor hired by the County covered an additional 73,000 square feet of vandalized surfaces.

When residents call the Graffiti Removal Hotline at 768-4400, the following information is needed: address (street and number), nearest cross street, structure description and the original color. The caller's name and number are requested in case the staff can't find the location. Please speak slowly and clearly when leaving a message on the Hotline.

“We encourage residents to adopt a proactive role in addressing graffiti and litter in their neighborhoods,” Rodriguez says. “There is a rippling effect that ultimately results in invaluable benefits to the entire community.”



BERNALILLO COUNTY FIRE HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS CONTINUE

Bernalillo County Fire & Rescue Chief Bett Clark reports that Bernalillo County is forecast to come under a RED FLAG WARNING. RED FLAG WARNINGS indicate fire conditions exist for wildfire that will endanger the citizens and property of Bernalillo County due to unseasonably dry conditions. Firefighters within the department have been directed to take specific actions to prepare for the likelihood of wildfires and Chief Clark offers this advice to local residents and property owners: "A residential protection plan for grass and brush fires has four phases. The first phase is escape. At least two alternate routes should be planned. The second phase is property protection. Systematic fuel removal to develop firebreaks is good planning. Third is early fire department notification and

response. Just as important as the fire department's phone number is clear address identification of the endangered land and buildings. Fourth is fire suppression. The ability to self-extinguish small fires can prevent larger fires." Most importantly, Chief Clark warns, "Be extra careful with fire!"



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For more information visit our website at www.bernco.gov or
call Lenton Malry, Neighborhood Association Coordinator at 768-4364